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# WHO'S CARING FOR THE CAREGIVERS?

November 14, 2011 by cpehrson

Rosalyn Carter said it best: "There are only four kinds of people in the world – those who have been caregivers, those who *are currently* caregivers, those who *will be* caregivers and those who *will need* caregivers."

Nationally, there are more than 65 million family caregivers providing care to aging or disabled family members. Family caregiving requires the constant juggling of work, family life and maintaining their own autonomy. Without adequate support, maintaining and continually meeting the needs of the entire family is difficult.

In order to be able to take care of a family member with special health needs, caregivers need to first take care of themselves.

A recent study done by the Allsup and National Family Caregivers Association found that the top two concerns of caretakers are taking care of their own personal health, and a lack of respite care to give them a break.

"Too often caregivers are so focused on other people's needs that they neglect their own," National Family Caregivers Association President Suzanne Mintz states. "This survey tells us our members recognize the importance of self-care. They have internalized our message that if they cannot take care of themselves, they cannot take care of their loved ones."

Some good advice is the suggestion to "...be good to yourself. Love, honor and value yourself." That includes making sure that caregiver's health needs are taken care of and that ways are found for them to take a break from caretaking.

We applaud the great impact that family caregivers have on the lives of their loved ones. Take good care of yourselves.

*This is the second of four blogs about family caregivers for November's National Family Caregivers month.*